wheat of Fair Average Quality (FAQ) norms offered for sale at the designated procurement centres are bought by the public procuring agencies at the Minimum Support Price (MSP). Rice is also collected under statutory levy from rice millers/dealers.

(b) and (c) As on 1-4-2003 the stock position of wheat and rice in the Central Pool was 156.45 lakh tonnes and 171.57 lakh tonnes respectively which is well above the minimum buffer norms. Due to drought conditions, there has been an increase in the offtake of foodgrains under the Special Component of Sampoorna Gramin Rozgar Yojana (SGRY) which has contributed to reduction of the excess stocks in the Central Pool. However, adequate quantities of rice and wheat have been procured by the Government to both maintain the prescribed buffer stocking norms as well as to meet the entire demand under TPDS and other Welfare Schemes.

Quota of ration for poor

5007. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR : Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) has raised the monthly quota of ration for the 'poorest of the poor' under the Antyodaya Anna Yojana to 35 kg. per family; and

(b) if so, the justification therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SUBHASH MAHARIA) : (a) and (b) Yes Sir. The quota of ration for the families under the Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) has been increased to 35 kg. per family per month with effect from 1.4.2002 to enhance the food security of the poorest of the poor in the country.

MSP of Crops

5008. SHRI SURENDRA LATH : Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are aware of the fact that the farmers in several States and particularly in Orissa are not getting Minimum Support Price for the crops they produce;

(b) if so, the steps taken by Government to ensure payment of MSP to the farmers in the State; and

(c) the steps taken to streamline the procurement process?